1791

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine ears, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

It is absurd to talk about bribery in the present Senate. The monopolists are not fools; they don't pay for things which they can get for nothing. The Senate is so extremely protectionist that there is absolutely no need of bribing it to vote for protectionist duties.

Anything that will make decent people run faster than ever from politics is highly desirable indeed. Woman suffrage is likely to have that effect. It is appalling to think of the dirt that the women voters and candidates would bring into politics, but the more dirt the better. In considering the subject, let us not forget this argument, brethren.

Let no reader of Liberty be deluded into reading "The Anarchist: A Story of Today," by R. H. Savage. It is a silly story stupidly told; the plot hardly ranks above the dime novel, and the lack of anything like an idea is so painfully apparent that even the conservative must be ashamed to welcome this new champion of the *status quo*.

I have observed the prodigal display of patriotism with which the people have decorated the graves of "dead heroes" and lavished their spare love and money in honor of the "immortals." Were those "heroes" still mortally among us, most of them would be in the ranks of Coxey's army, without glory and a very slim chance of getting a penny's worth of sympathy (or cash) lavished upon them, but with the certainty of a shower of ribald remarks from the pen of the Janus-faced editors who are now gushing over with the "glory" article.

The people of Ohio have discovered that it is possible to have too much even of such a fine and good thing as government. They are rejoicing that the legislature has adjourned and that it is not to meet again until 1896. It appears that, although the constitution of the State provides for biennial sessions, the lawmakers have for years evaded this restriction by taking a "recess" at the end of the first regular session after their election instead of adjourning *sine die*. This year the protests of the press and people forced them to exercise more self-restraint, and there is joy over the result.

The Boston "Transcript," referring to the connection of the sugar trust with tariff legislation, observes that, "if the sugar people are allowed to make our laws, we have no government now." Oh, yes, we have a government,—the government of the sugar trust. There is no difference whatever between the government of the Gormans, Hills, and Brices, and the government of the sugar gentlemen. They are all members of the brotherhood of thieves, and the platform of that brotherhood is sure of being carried out, no matter who is the master of ceremonies.

It has long been held that a man need not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. But it now appears that he may as well do so if he lives in Germany, for there, even though he wear it beneath his sleeve, it will not escape the pecking of the daw that chatters from the German throne. Young William evidently looks upon the tattooing to which an Erfurt subject subjected himself (the sentiments being seditious) as a new form of "propaganda by deed," adopted for the purpose of spreading Anarchism among women. It is said, however, by those who claim to know, that any woman who enjoys the intimacy of William is suspected of something worse than Anarchism.

Godkin, of the New York "Evening Post," says that the proclamation lately issued by Governor Lewelling, of Kansas, on the rights of tramps amounted to a glorification of the tramp. Godkin lies, and lies deliberately, no doubt. Governor Lewelling protested against the hue and cry of brutal editors, mouthpieces of the brotherhood of thieves, that the tramp, as tramp, is a criminal and has no rights that "law and order" automata are bound to respect. He insisted that the tramp should be allowed to be a tramp and protected against interference as long as *he* refrained from interference. Godkin pretends to be an Individualist. What objection is there against the Lewelling view, which is the view of common sense and common fairness? Is there any wonder that Godkinian Individualism is met by bombs? It is true that the bomb policy really gives the brutal editors more power and influence than they would otherwise exert; but not everybody is philosophical enough to reason this fact out and strong enough to restrain his natural impulses.

How is it that the "Open Court's" mourners, in their sincere and appreciative estimates of the late General Trumbull's contributions to the various fields of human activity, refrained from mentioning his great, brave, and admirable work in defence of the "Chicago Anarchists"? Was the omission purely accidental? It is impossible to believe it. Perhaps it was deemed well to avoid offending those who did not sympathize with his attitude on that important question, but such a course is in direct opposition to the teachings and practices of the dead worker. Surely even those of his friends who could not endorse his position must have admired the purity and nobility of his purpose and the moral courage displayed by him during the crisis. How, else it, further, that the "Open Court" mourners sought to convey the impression that General Trumbull was not a materialist and Atheist? It is the simple truth to say that he never pretended to favor the "monistic" doctrines of the "Open Court" or to discover anything substantial in them. He took no interest in the religious tendencies of the paper, and considered them harmless. Liberty makes this averment not because it happens to agree with the views of General Trumbull on religious questions, but solely in the interest of truth. In politics, there was no fundamental agreement between Liberty and General Trumbull. He was not a logical, consistent, or scientific thinker, but he loved liberty and fair play, and the oppressed always found in him a valiant champion. His death is a great loss to independent and honest journalism and to the cause of human progress.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight. All, whether members or not, are asked to have no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Eddytown, Yates Co., N. Y.

Suggestion No. 4. — Jerry McAuley's advice to speakers in prayer-meeting: "If you have come down here with a speech prepared with a beginning and a middle and an end to it, cut off the beginning and the end and give us the middle." Words used for the sake of gracefulness, and especially introductory words, are commonly wasted. Two sentences make introduction enough. A letter to a paper is by nature fragmentary, and should not pretend to be otherwise.

Since your space is necessarily brief, it is better to spend it in saying what you have to say than in getting ready to say it.

Target, Section A. — The "Home Advocate," Dundee, N. Y., a Prohibition paper, is liberal in publishing letters from all standpoints. Be tolerably brief.

Section B. — The "Kansan," Pittsburg, Kan., had an editorial a month ago on "Effective Anarchists," meaning judges who declare laws for the people's benefit unconstitutional. Instance, such a decision on a recent Kansas law reducing the salaries of the officers of Cherokee and Crawford counties. It says: "No inferior court should ever be permitted to declare any law null and void; that should be a question of the highest privilege, reserved to the highest court." Show the editor what effective Anarchism would be and do, or what should be the highest court. It is a Populist paper. STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

And Why Not?

Dialogue overheard on the Parisian boulevards.

"Who is that pretty woman to whom you just bowed?"

"She is the wife of two of my friends."

Liberty.

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NEW YORK, N. Y., JUNE 2, 1894.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all these insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Compulsory Vaccination.

The Board of Health of Brooklyn has been disporting itself of late with an unusually virulent outbreak of smallpox. While for a century or so smallpox has been on the wane, it has not become quite extinct, like the plague and other epidemics of times past. On the contrary, a few cases are always occurring in all large cities of the world; sporadic cases they are called, half a dozen or so monthly in a city of a million are quite a matter of course. But when the Brooklyn doctors found the number of cases almost doubling each month, running up to a hundred or more, they were naturally scared.

Strenuous measures were at once taken by the board of health. Detachments of doctors and policemen were sent through all the houses of the poor and everybody was "urged" to be vaccinated. The climax was reached when some stout heart, having some surviving reminiscence of the meaning of personal liberty, refused to admit the vaccinating corps to his rooms, in the face of their threats and warnings. Thereupon the board, having really no power of compulsory vaccination, but bent all the same upon compulsion, declared the rooms infected and quarantined the occupants, refusing to allow food to be brought to them until they should consent to be vaccinated.

The matter was brought before the courts, and, much to the surprise of those who, like myself, had entire confidence in the tyrannical instincts of the American people, a decision has recently been given — "handed down" is the proper boot-licking phrase, I believe — by Judge Gaynor, to the effect that the board of health had no legal right to use such measures to compel people to be vaccinated.

In this decision all who understand what liberty means must acquiesce. Admitting, for the sake of argument, — for I am not prepared to admit it finally, — that certain cases of contagious disease we must remove by force, it is plain that such methods of self-defence must be exercised only in cases of the gravest nature. Certainly, where a fellow being has no contagious disease, we are hardly justified in giving him one in order to protect ourselves and himself, incidentally, from another. Such a course is even more tyrannical than it would be to impose a compulsory course of treatment after he had the disease, for it contemplates nothing less than a compulsory course of treatment for a well man.

Even if the prophylactic power of vaccination were complete, it would be unreasonable for everybody to keep up the practice after smallpox had become extinct; as unreasonable as it would be at this day to inoculate every child against the black death. But when its prophylactic power is not held to be complete, even by its defenders, the amount of real protection afforded by it must always remain open to question.

Without taking any position upon the merits of the question, there are at least plausible reasons to be adduced in derogation of its alleged virtue. Why, for instance, are we not favored with some report as to the number of cases found among those who had already been vaccinated? Why, when the whole tendency of medical knowledge is to discredit the methods of the past, should especial reverence be demanded for so antiquated a process as vaccination? Why, when the evidence in other virulent epidemics tends to show that the medical treatment has been the cause of their destructiveness in the past, and that when medical treatment ceases, they become tractable and relatively innocuous, as in the case of yellow fever, in which it seems the percentage of mortality has diminished to a fraction of what it used to be, now that the ancient treatment is abolished, why should not the experiment at least be tried of dispensing with treatment in other kinds of epidemics?

Why, finally, should we be prepossessed with a method which has gained its present vogue, not by intelligent test of its merits, but by legal compulsion and professional stress? For a doctor would no more risk being called in question for letting a patient go unvaccinated than an architect would risk letting a steeple go without a lightning-rod.

But whatever be the answers to such questions, which complete investigation might give, it is evident that in the end one who is socially free must choose his own doctor and his own treatment; just as one who is religiously free must choose his own priest and his own church. The contrary opinion ends in the establishment of a compulsory State medical practice to the detriment of scientific advance in medicine, and of a compulsory State church to the detriment of scientific advance in ethics.

A medical process does not gain respect for itself in the minds of the intelligent, by forcing the ignorant and helpless to submit to it under the terrorism of bluecoats and brass buttons.

JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON.

A Hypocritical Protest.

The New York "Sun" prints with apparent approval the three minutes' speech of Congressman Cummings, one of its editors, in opposition to the perfectly just proposal that the government should cease carrying books by mail at the rate of one cent a pound. This proposal is characterized by the congressman as a criminal attempt to raise the price of literature. Cummings lies, and he knows it. The proposal is simply an attempt to undo the crime by which the price of certain literature was lowered at the expense of people who do not read it. Cummings says he had rather pay more for his potatoes than for his books. But that isn't the point, Cummings. The point is that whatever price you pay for either your potatoes or your books you ought to pay out of your own pocket, and that when, instead of paying for them yourself, you force the people to pay for them, you are a robber. Like Dana, your associate, you belong to the brotherhood of thieves. Both of you are continually howling against State Socialism, and yet here you uphold the purely State Socialistic crime by which the non-consumers of books are made to pay for the consumption of books. If the State were to *print* books and newspapers and sell them at less than cost, you would be wild with indignation; but, when it *carries* them at less than cost (precisely the same thing in principle), you denounce as criminal the indignation of others at this robbery. Shall I tell you the reason why? It is because you are in the printing business and not in the carrying business, pair of pretentious hypocrites that you are!

T.

The Importance of Jury Trial.

A consideration of what trial by jury involves, leads me to think that it is a question of vital importance, and one which has hardly received its fair share of attention from radical papers. The system outlined by Spooner demands, 1) that the jury be selected by lot from among the people in order that it may be thoroughly representative, in the same sense that a sample of grain is representative of the whole sack; 2) that the jury be given power to judge the law as well as the prisoner, not in the restricted sense in which juries in Illinois are given power to interpret the law after it has been explained by the court, but in the fullest possible sense.

It is not necessary here to meet the objections to such a system. Spooner has done that most admirably in his "Free Political Institutions" (in his "Trial of John Webster" he deals with the method of packing a jury by rejecting all who are opposed to the law). It is, however, important to emphasize the fact that such a system gives the jury, which represents the people far more fully than any body of men elected by majority vote, the power to modify the law to meet the exigencies of any particular case, or even to overthrow it altogether. With such a system it would be impossible to enforce any law to which a considerable portion of the community object. This would make passive resistance far more effective. In very few prohibition States could a jury of twelve men be found which would render a unanimous verdict to punish a man for selling liquor. Nor would it be easy to find a jury in any part of the United States which would imprison a man for smuggling, if people realized that it is the proper function of a jury to protect the people from the law, not to enforce it.

Of course, this would not abolish rent and interest. But under such a system it would be possible to defy the laws which prohibit mutual banks with a fair chance of immunity from punishment as soon as one person out of twelve was convinced of the iniquity of those laws.

And I think it would not take much more propaganda to make it reasonably safe to refuse to pay rent. For if it came to such a test, most State Socialists and a goodly number of Single Taxers could be relied upon to give a verdict for the defendant.

Frequently the question of jury reform is agitated in the capitalistic press. It seems as if some change will be made in the near future. Nearly all the reforms that are advocated are reactionary, giving greater power to judges and other employés of the State. Surely it is now time to make a stand for progressive reform. Perhaps this might even be made the next step towards freedom, for the demands do not seem so radical to the ordinary mind, and yet the effects are far-reaching.

F. D. Tandy.

General M. M. Trumbull.

A little over three years ago General M. M. Trumbull wrote me, in his characteristic way, that he was suffering with that incurable malady "invented by a fiend named Bright," that his kid was packed, his knapsack slung, and that he was ready to march at any moment. But as he was a valiant soldier and fighting moreover under the skilled directions of his faithful companion, his wife, he kept his enemy at bay and continued to pursue his "perilous trade" as an independent journalist, until only in April of the present year he wrote again (now in his sixty-ninth year), and surely without intending any pious implications: "I am standing on the very edge of eternity and calmly looking out upon a prospective that is boundless, unfathomable, and inscrutable." He was still afflicted with Bright's disease, but he knew that it was an unconquerable foe and that it could "foreclose the mortgage" on him at any moment. And though his body was racked with pain, he closed his letter in the cheerful vein that, "allowing for that small drawback," he was enjoying himself well, and that he was "very thankful that Dr. Bright, when he invented his dire disease, placed it in the kidneys instead of in the brain."

Only a month later the enemy rung his knell, and General Trumbull laid down his pen forever. Justice mourns one of her ablest champions, truth an enthusiastic lover, all good causes a chivalrous defender, and free spirits everywhere a most delightful friend and comrade.

It would be a grateful task to trace in detail the career of this remarkable man: — his boyhood in London, where he was born; his connection with the Chartist movement in England in the days of his enthusiastic youth, when he imbibed those principles which did so much toward shaping his whole future course; his strange adventures on coming to the United States, and his early struggles here with wheelbarrow, pick, and shovel; his self-education in the university of the world; his experiences in the Mexican war, and the important part he played in the War of the Rebellion; and, toward the close, his literary life in Chicago, in which it all flowered. Characterized as this career was in all its phases by intelligence, courage, and valor, it would read like some beautiful story of old when knights rode out in search of the prizes of life.

I first met General Trumbull at the Chicago Liberal League about twelve years ago, and at once formed a warm and lasting attachment for him on account of his genial disposition, his broad and enlightened views, and his rare freedom of manner. Almost more than with anyone else at that time did I find myself in touch with him in regard to a number of important questions of a religious, political, and sociological nature, and he naturally became associated with myself and Mrs. Schumm in our work on the "Radical Review." It was in connection with this paper that he wrote his incomparable pulpit criticisms and his splendid series of articles on the labor question under the pen-name of "Wheelbarrow."

In the pulpit criticisms he fought Christianity, of which he was an uncompromising foe, with the effective weapons of a most delicate and delightful humor and a keen analytical mind. These articles were not of an ephemeral nature, but have qualities of enduring worth, and I know that their author himself set so high a value on them as to contemplate getting them out in book form.

In the "Wheelbarrow" articles, which have since been gathered and published in a small book, the first edition by myself, the second by the Open Court Publishing Company, he eloquently championed the cause of labor in his own independent way. But, as he hated the tyranny of capital, so he hated also the tyranny of labor, and fearlessly subjected trade unions and other labor organizations to severe but just criticism whenever they entered on a policy of restriction and coercion in the accomplishment of their ends. He confidently offered liberty as a most valuable means for the solution of the grievances of workingmen, and though he did not pursue this course to the length and breadth of Anarchism, he went far enough to come within earshot and eyeshot of Anarchists.

Altogether, in his treatment of public questions, General Trumbull occupied such high ground that he was often misunderstood by high and low alike. Talking about a certain line of conduct approved by him one day with an eminent historical scholar, the latter said to me: "Oh, General Trumbull is a very eccentric man, and will say this or that merely because he likes to be in opposition." Now nothing could have been farther from the truth, and nothing could be more true than what General Trumbull himself wrote me in answer to my report of that little speech: "Men who know me as well as you do, know that he was wrong. You know how disagreeable it is for me to be in opposition, and how enthusiastically I support and defend the men and measures that I believe to be right. No man desires more than I do to be on the popular side, and I always try to get there whenever I can do so without losing my self-respect. If I cannot applaud myself, the applause of other men hurts me like the severest condemnation. I care nothing for the favor of the rich and powerful, although I would like to have the approbation of the workingmen if I could get it honestly, but I will not flatter them or their prejudices in order to obtain it. Nobs and mobs are all the same to me."

Another book which made General Trumbull's name known in two continents was his "History of the Free Trade Struggle in England and Its American Lesson," first edition by Schumm & Simpson, the second by the Open Court Publishing Company. Of this book, the best on the subject of which it treats and one which was highly commended by many eminent men, among others by John Bright, it is not too much to say that it is as fascinating as a novel, while it gives a faithful account of the free trade struggle in the campaign initiated by the Anti-Corn-Law League in England and waged between that League and the Tory protectionists, and strongly points out the lesson to be learned by the American people. As Mr. Tucker once said, of all good causes free trade is one of the smallest; but small as it is, the American people, it would appear, are not yet ready to solve it, and General Trumbull's book is still far in advance of the time.

However, magnificent as General Trumbull's services briefly outlined in the foregoing are, they are comparatively commonplace and perhaps would not entitle him to mention in Liberty were it not for another circumstance which lifts him far above common mortals and places him with the race of true heroes. I refer to his course in connection with the Chicago Communists. Like the individualistic Anarchists, General Trumbull thoroughly detested the Communistic ideal of society, but this fact did not blind him like so many others to the monstrous wrong that was perpetrated against those unfortunate men in the name of the State, and he chivalrously and without fee took up their defence in the court of public opinion, thus recalling Voltaire, who in a similar crisis from his retreat at Farney espoused the cause of the hapless Jean Calas. Much has been made, by some of his friends, of brave and valorous deeds performed by him on the tented field, but the loftiest heroism shines forth alone from the two pamphlets entitled "Was It a Fair Trial?" and "The Trial of the Judgment," in which he disclosed with an unerring hand the incredible chicanery, the absolute unscrupulousness, and the consummate perfidy of the constituted authorities in hounding those men to death. When the public mind was utterly befogged by the scandalous and lying reports of a prostitute press, and all other men remained silent, his powerful words rang out clearly and brought some light where before all had been darkness. By this action General Trumbull became one man in sixty-five millions. No wonder that, as he himself wrote in a letter, his course in denouncing the judicial crime committed by Judge Gary brought upon him the proscription of the "broadcloth mob," but he also had the gratification of seeing that he had arrested the mad rage that roared so fiercely for a time, and that public sentiment was changing to his side.

General Trumbull felt very strongly on the subject of the wrong done those Chicago men, and this fact ought to carry the more weight since he was not "one of them" and, as I have said, thoroughly detested their ideal of society. As indicating his feelings, I will offer a quotation from one of his letters, which ought to be incorporated in his published writings. When Mr. Kennan delivered his lectures in Chicago on the Russian policy anent the Nihilists, the Associated Press despatches startled liberty-loving people one morning by the report that Mr. Grinnell, the prosecuting attorney in the Anarchist case, had introduced the lecturer to his audience. It appears that I passed some re-

marks on this incident in a letter to General Trumbull, for he wrote under date of Feb. 2, 1891: "Accept my thanks for your indignant contempt of Mr. Kennan's anti-climax, his acceptance of Grinnell's public patronage. The moment he did that, his 'moral show' collapsed, or rather faded out like one of his own dissolving views. His protest against Russian tyranny became an absurd solecism, a mere matter of gate-money, when he permitted Grinnell, the Cossack hangman, to introduce him to the audience. I have been told that Mr. Kennan protested against the indignity, but that he was forced to swallow it. A gentleman who was present told me that Grinnell himself saw the incongruity, and stammered and choked as if he felt the rope that strangled Parsons tightening around his own throat. That Mr. Kennan should have accepted the services of this mean soul is a degradation from which he never can recover. No matter how tragic his denunciations, they at once become laughable under the patronage of Grinnell."

No man rejoiced more over Governor Altgeld's brave act in pardoning Fielden, Schwab, and Neebe than General Trumbull, and when by some of the comparatively few who did not join in the general condemnation of the governor's course exception was yet weakly taken to the form of his pardon, General Trumbull wrote an able and unanswerable defence of it in the "Open Court."

All in all, General Trumbull was a singularly brave and honest man, and one, moreover, who instinctively viewed things in an ideal light. He was one of those rare spirits, of whom the poet speaks, who off-cast their moorings from the habitable past and venture, chartless, on the sea of storm-engendering liberty. Never burdening himself "with drudgery, Lord of white silver and red gold to be," he chose rather to lead the forlorn hope of truth and justice in a world steeped in ignorance and crime.

Besides contributing articles to a number of magazines, he was also a regular writer for the "Open Court." Discriminating with a quick insight between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, he delivered weekly judgments on men and measures in his bright and eloquent way, to the delight and profit of many friends, until the tent-pitcher death struck his tent and called him from his post. But to us he will remain a pleasant and inspiring memory.

G. S.

The latest proposition is that there be a law prohibiting the publication of any pictures representing women laced out of their natural shape by corsets, in order that women may not be enticed into using such things. The author of this idea meant to improve the public health, and he has; for laughter is healthful. The thought of what the illustrated papers would look like, while the real women on the street would still dress the same as now, is enough to make one want the law passed just for fun's sake.

The State's Brutality.

[London Free Life.]

During the present war the "Times" correspondent (December 21) reported a significant little fact about the Brazilian government. It refused to allow him to organize an ambulance service for the wounded "on the ground that the men, when cured, would again fight against the Government."

"The garden of the laws is full of ironical plants, of unexpected flowers; and by no means its slightest charm is this subversion of the natural order, whereby appear at the end of stems and branches fruit just the opposite of that which is promised by the essence of the tree or bush. The apple-tree bears figs, and the cherry-tree medlars; violet-plants yield sweet potatoes, and hollyhocks salsify. It is delicious."
—SÉVERINE.

The Beauties of Government.

☞ *The readers of Liberty are urgently invited to contribute to this department. It is open to any statement of facts which exhibit the State in any phase of its fourfold capacity of fool, meddler, knave, and tyrant. Either original accounts based upon the writer's own knowledge, or apparently reliable accounts clipped from recent publications, are welcome.*

COMSTOCK AS CENSOR.

[New York Recorder.]

The trouble between the R. Worthington Company, of 747 Broadway, and the receiver of the concern, J. J. Little, of the Little Publishing Company, of 8 Astor place, which has been going on for several years in the supreme court, has culminated in the appearance of Anthony Comstock as the advisory counsel of the court as to the character of certain books which came to Mr. Little in his capacity as receiver.

In 1885 Mr. Comstock discovered that the Worthington Company were publishing and selling the unexpurgated edition of the Arabian Nights, published under the title of "A Thousand Nights and One Night." He ordered Mr. Worthington to destroy the plates. Mr. Worthington said that the plates belonged to George Barrie, a Philadelphia publisher. Mr. Comstock, through the District Attorney of Philadelphia, compelled Mr. Barrie to stop the publication of the book. The sale of the books was prohibited and the plates and books were dumped into Worthington & Co.'s cellar, where they were recently discovered by Receiver Little.

Mr. Little also found in the cellar as companion pieces of the Arabian Nights, copies of Bocaccio's "De Cameron," Margaret of Valois' "Heptameron," Balzac's "Droll Stories," Ovid's "Art of Love," "Tom Jones," "Rabelais," and other books of a similar character. These properties raised the assets about $15,000, the value of the plates of the "Arabian Nights" alone being fixed at $8,500.

Mr. Comstock heard of this racy collection in some way, and sent Mr. Little a notice that he would make a seizure if these books were offered for sale as a part of the Worthington assets. Mr. Little applied to the supreme court for instructions. The judges replied that they did not have sufficient data upon which to base an opinion. Then he sent copies of all the books to Mr. Comstock for criticism, and Mr. Comstock made out a very elaborate brief for the instruction of the supreme court judges, and quoted freely from the objectionable books to show that they were not fit for publication. The brief was sent to the judges yesterday with copies of the books, and they will have an opportunity to see how it is themselves.

[New York Sun.]

Anthony Comstock never heard of "Tom Jones." He confesses it. He has been in the business of bridling what he calls vice, of suppressing everything under the sun that doesn't strike him as right, for a longer term of years than most persons care to remember; yet he never heard of "Tom Jones," and never knew how he was permitting public morals to go to the bad. He knows about "Tom Jones" now, and in the future he's going to prevent the sale of "Tom Joneses."

A. Comstock's ignorance, and consequent inadvertent negligence, was exposed recently. He was out of town, and nobody at the office of the Society for the Suppression of Vice would say whether or not his absence followed upon remorse and chagrin at thinking of all the "Tom Joneses" he might have suppressed and didn't. He was gone, and nobody could say when he would be back.

A. Comstock's enlightenment in the matter took place when ex-Congressman J. J. Little, receiver of the Worthington Company, booksellers and publishers, submitted to Mr. Comstock some books from the stock of the company which he thought he might like to look at. It appears that Mr. Little discovered that Mr. Worthington had been prohibited by A. Comstock, nearly ten years ago, from publishing and selling the unexpurgated edition of the "Arabian Nights." He did not wish to break the law, even A. Comstock's law, so, as receiver of the company, he submitted to the supreme court the question whether or not he had the right to sell, as part of the company's assets, such books as A. Comstock had spoken badly of. The court declined to invade A. Comstock's territory by setting itself up as a censor, and so Mr. Little took the bull by the horns and submitted the books to A. Comstock himself. The books were the "Arabian Nights," Ovid's "Art of Love," Balzac's "Droll Stories," the "Decameron," the "Heptameron," and last, and, as it turned out, far from least, "Tom Jones."

A. Comstock's report was a long brief. He said the books submitted were abominable. He said that great numbers of persons had been fined and imprisoned for handling them. He also said that when he, A. Comstock, first ordered Worthington to destroy the books and plates, ten years ago, Worthington said he was acting for George Barrie, a Philadelphia publisher. The district attorney of Philadelphia told Barrie to stop. The district attorney of New York told Worthington to stop. Accordingly they stopped, and the books and plates were stored in Worthington's cellar, awaiting the time when New York should have no A. Comstock. All this A. Comstock recounted in his brief. Then he went through the law and cited all the decisions that had been made in his favor. Finally he wound up:

"Applying these decisions to the filthy matter in the books published by the Worthington Company, there can be no question in the mind of any decent or fair-minded man that such publications are clearly within the ban of the law and that the possession of such property for sale is clearly an offence."

Mr. Little thought the brief a little too comprehensive. He wrote to A. Comstock, asking a specific report on "Tom Jones," on "Rabelais," and on Rousseau's "Confessions." A. Comstock wrote in reply another report. It was in this report that A. Comstock told about the "Tom Jones" shock. He had never heard of the book; it was very bad; it was indeed an eye-opener. Those were not his exact words, but that's what he meant. Then A. Comstock went out of town. His decision was not final, but Mr. Little said last night that he would probably respect it.

"Mr. Comstock and myself are not at odds," said Mr. Little. "I sent him the books and asked his opinion, simply because I wanted the law on the subject. I don't think any of the creditors of the Worthington Company would want the books sold if they thought they were improper and that the sale would be contrary to law. As receiver, and therefore an officer of the court, I can now only lay the matter before the supreme court. By its decision I must abide. The books are now in the possession of Mr. Comstock, but they will be returned to me within a few days. Mr. Comstock doesn't object to the pictures in any of them, but to the text."

When asked if A. Comstock had acknowledged his unfamiliarity with any of the other books submitted besides "Tom Jones," Mr. Little smiled and said that Mr. Comstock didn't say.

[New York Sun.]

Anthony Comstock, the impeccable, the hypersensitive, the oracular, who squints into all the shop windows as he passes by and suppresses everything indecent but himself, has returned to town, presumably ready to peel off his coat and pitch into things again. He was at his office yesterday, on the fifth floor of the New York "Times" building, and the smile he wore told that his mission into new fields must have been a successful one. He sat at his desk, with the strong light of the window behind him, and, to a person coming in suddenly from the darker outer room, it seemed almost that his head was surrounded by an aureola. He looked as if he might be a second St. Anthony; only A. Comstock has close-cropped gamboge mutton chops, and St. Anthony, so far as is known, hadn't.

"I have nothing to say," said A. Comstock promptly to the "Sun's" young man, "I do not submit to interviews. I haven't time. Besides, I'm always misquoted. If I talk to a reporter for two minutes it takes me two days to deny it all afterward. I never get a fair show. This society and I are invariably misrepresented. Why, I don't know."

A. Comstock sat and twiddled his thumbs for a moment in silence. Then, slapping a bundle of papers on his desk, he went on:

"I won't talk, I tell you. What do you want to know about, anyway? 'Tom Jones?' Didn't I tell you I had nothing to say? I and this society aren't treated fairly. What do you want to know about 'Tom Jones?'"

"I wanted to know," said the reporter meekly, "what fault you found with Tom Jones when you read it?"

"I didn't read it. You don't catch me reading anything like that. It's scurrilous. It's abominable. It's indecent. This society and I — —. How do I know it's not a fit book to read if I didn't read it? Say, didn't I tell you I wouldn't talk?"

"Of course, you know, Mr. Comstock," said the reporter, "what Gibbon and Thackeray thought of 'Tom Jones' and of Fielding? Of course, you know that Byron called Fielding the 'prose Homer of human nature'?"

A. Comstock smiled complacently, patted the bundle of papers, and said nothing.

"Aren't the 'Decameron' and the 'Heptameron' and 'Tom Jones' considered classics?" asked the reporter. "Don't you yourself consider them standard works?"

"Those books are not of the privileged class," replied A. Comstock, guardedly.

"What is the privileged class, Mr. Comstock?"

A. Comstock said nothing.

"Isn't it your own classification, Mr. Comstock?—your own and the society's?"

"Gracious me!" exclaimed A. Comstock, crossing and uncrossing his legs irritably. "Didn't I tell you I wouldn't talk? This society and I have been misrepresented ever since we — it has been in existence. I told you when you came in here that I wouldn't talk. Er — what do you want to know, anyway?"

"Are you not aware, Mr. Comstock, that the books to which you have taken exception — sat upon, so to speak — are for sale by nearly every first-class bookseller in town?"

"I am not. I don't believe it. They wouldn't be if I knew of it. I've had decisions of law upholding me in all the places I've been. I've convicted people not only in this State, but in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I'd like to hear of any place where those books are on sale."

"Don't you know that you can buy a copy of the 'Decameron' by sending a messenger to the next corner? Don't you know that a bookseller in Sixth avenue regularly advertises 'Tom Jones' and the 'Decameron' and the 'Heptameron' and 'Rousseau's Confession's' and the 'Art of Love,' and anything else you want to buy?"

"I don't know anything of the kind. Just tell me who he is, and he won't advertise much longer, or sell, either."

"Do you mean to say that you will suppress the sale of all those books?"

A. Comstock leaned back in his chair, and broke his aureola by getting out of the direct rays of light from the window. "It is the intention of this society," he said slowly, "to prohibit the exposure or sale of all that is pernicious, meretricious, and debasing. I am here to see that its purpose is carried out. So long as I have authority I intend to exert it."

"To get down to a specific case, Mr. Comstock, what action will you take in the matter of the books which form part of the Worthington Company's assets should Mr. Little obtain an order of court permitting their sale? Will you seize them should they be offered for sale?"

A. Comstock folded his hands and answered oracularly: "The society and I never cross a bridge before we come to it."

"Would you ignore an order of court?"

"Didn't I tell you when you came in here that I hadn't a word to say? I refuse to talk. I haven't talked and I won't. I never talk. It doesn't pay. I haven't time. If I talk I regret it. If I don't talk I don't regret it. Therefore, you can see why I have nothing to say."

"But you have failed to explain how you know so much about 'Tom Jones' when, according to your own confession, you never read it."

"Failed to explain? All right. Then I won't have to explain what I didn't say. That'll save my time and prove more satisfactory all around."

A. Comstock uttered not a word more. He leaned forward at his desk again. Then, instantly, the aureola reappeared. It shone about his head, refulgent and sublime. From the outer room, where two clerks were at work, one fat and one slim, A. Comstock looked like a reincarnation of the good St. Anthony, barring, as before, the gamboge whiskers.

THE VACCINATION OUTRAGE.

[New York World.]

The Burggraff family, consisting of husband, wife, and four children, occupy rooms over the seltzer-water factory, No. 30 Thames street. The children, Julia, 10 years; Joseph, 11 years; Sophia, 7 years, and Peter, 5 years of age, were all in the best of health three weeks ago. The three oldest had been vaccinated a year ago. When Julia was vaccinated at school she fainted. Two days afterwards her left arm was swollen to three times its natural size. This was followed by a swelling on the left side of the body. The little sufferer recovered sufficiently to return to school last Monday morning, but before the noon recess came she was so ill that she was sent home.

The child had strength enough left to reach the top of the stairs, above the store, where she staggered to her mother's arms, saying, "Mamma!" and her jaws closed in a death-like vice. The mother tried to pour some liquid between her teeth, but without avail. Drs. Meyers and Schwab were called in, but said they could do nothing for the little sufferer. The arm and side had ceased swelling, but there was a hole where the vaccine had been applied reaching to the bone, an inch in diameter. The child suffered untold tortures from the time she reached home until death finally ended her sufferings.

To a "World" reporter the mother said: "My children were in good health before being vaccinated. Julia's arm swelled to a fearful size, as did one side of her body. When I was dressing my daughter's arm I could see to the bone where the vaccine scab had been. I protested against my little ones being vaccinated at the school, and told them to say to any doctor who came there that their mamma would have her own doctor attend to it. Julia, Joseph, and Sophie did object, but it was of no use, they had to submit."

Dr. Schaab, of 717 Flushing avenue, one of the attending physicians, said last evening that the primary cause of the death was due to lock-jaw. The stiffening of the muscles extended down the body to the knees. He knew nothing about the vaccinating and was not prepared to say if the lockjaw was caused by impure virus.

The mother of the dead girl, after considerable questioning, said that the doctors in attendance had told her that her child's death was undoubtedly due to the vaccination. The doctors, however, will not express such an opinion for publication.

[New York Evening Sun.]

In one of the Brooklyn raids an old man, living alone, violently objected, but he *was surrounded by several policemen and finally caught. The officers held him while the doctors vaccinated him.* A woman weighing about 350 pounds resisted; it took nearly a dozen policemen to hold her.

[Health Monthly.]

The "Medical Record" says: "There is no doubt that some physicians still neglect to vaccinate aseptically. If they do, it is most reprehensible. In vaccinating a child the skin should be carefully sterilized, the hands of the operator clean, his instruments aseptic, and the water used for moistening the quill should be boiled. The wound should finally be carefully protected. If this be done, cases of erysipelas or other forms of infection will be very rare."

Are the surgeons of the Brooklyn Health Department, or public operators anywhere, using such precautions? If the work is not well done, it is not worth doing, and if not carefully done, at what cost of suffering and damage to the poor victims!

Daily papers give this report of a night's work among Italians living in fourteen blocks of Brooklyn tenements known as "The Green" district. Forty surgeons, aided by one hundred and twenty-five policemen, vaccinated 5,000 persons, many being roused from bed at midnight "to take their medicine." Allow 1,000 for careless reckoning, and if forty operators attended to even 4,000, that is, at the rate of 100 to each, and if they worked steadily for three hours, less than two minutes could have been given to each case. In Boston the business has been carried on at the rate of nearly one a minute. Such hurried vaccination simply cannot be "properly and thoroughly" done or with "ordinary care," according to the views of Drs. Bell and Shrady (editors of the "Record").

A POSTAL CARD TWELVE YEARS ON A JOURNEY.

[New York Sun.]

CHICAGO, April 21. — Emerson & Co., commission merchants, yesterday received a postal-card order from Tuscola, Ill., for a supply of blackberries. They were surprised at the order until it was discovered that the postmark bore date of Aug. 15, 1882, and that the card had been twelve years in transit from Tuscola. The sender of the card, J. C. Russell, removed from Tuscola several years ago.

[The State may be slow, but it seems that it is sure. Perhaps if we give it time enough, it will accomplish everything it has undertaken. We complain because we are hasty and unreasonable. Give it twelve years, and it will deliver a postal card; give it twelve hundred years, and it will clean the streets, and so on. However, this is only a hypothesis.]

IGNORANCE NO BAR.

[Washington Post.]

Farmer Edmunds, as he is generally known in the Fifty-first Congress, was a new congressman, fresh from the fields, and he was somewhat surprised to see that Speaker Reed had assigned him to the Committee on the Revision of the Laws. He went to Mr. Reed in sore distress:

"I know nothing about law, Mr. Speaker," he said; "I am a farmer."

"Don't give yourself any uneasiness," was Mr. Reed's reassuring reply. "In the first place, your committee will never have anything to do, and, in the second place, you are no worse off than I was when I came to Congress. I was put on the Committee on Territories, and to tell you the truth, Mr. Edmunds, I would not have known a Territory if I had met one walking down Pennsylvania avenue."

INCENDIARISM ON THE BENCH.

[New York Sun.]

PARIS, April 24. — The Anarchist Francis has been acquitted of the charge of connection with the explosion of the bomb in the Café Very, but was condemned by the court to three months imprisonment for insulting the police on the occasion of the recent search of his lodgings.

[The judge who pronounced this sentence should be proceeded against under the law against provocation to bomb-throwing.]

NOT CONTENT TO BE FIGUREHEADS.

[New York Sun.]

When the suit of Walter B. Williams against Catherine R. Dunscombe and others was tried in the Court of Common Pleas, Judge Daly decided it on a point of law, and directed the jury to bring in a verdict for the defendants. The jury did as they were told; but they didn't like it, and yesterday eight of them signed a certificate that the verdict was wrong. This certificate is intended to be used on appeal.

The point of law was that a certain document, a declaration of trust, had not been executed properly, and was therefore void. Some of the jurors do not agree with Judge Daly in his ruling, and especially object to his order taking the case from them. One of them, V. A. Seggermann, of No. 165 Duane street, wrote a letter to this effect on April 16, and gave his views in detail. The certificate was signed by Mr. Seggermann, Harrison D. Hunt, Herman Albert, Wm. Dammeyer, August C. Schwager, Herman B. Lubbert, F. S. Ferguson, and Chas. H. Eldrich. One of the remaining jurymen has gone to Europe, and the other three wanted to consult their lawyers before signing, although they agreed with Mr. Seggermann and not Judge Daly.

[The compelling of men to serve on juries, at an expense to themselves and to the taxpayers, for no other purpose than to afford the bench an opportunity to place the responsibility for its own injustice on their shoulders would be a ludicrous farce were it not a terrible tragedy.]

Ibsen's "Master-Builder."

L'Œuvre, one of the numerous theatrical organizations formed by the rising artistic generation of Paris for the production of plays of real moment, recently gave at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord the first performance of Henrik Ibsen's "Master Builder" that Paris has had an opportunity of witnessing. Jean Jullien, who, as a representative of the new school of dramatic criticism rivals Bernard Shaw in eminence, and who writes the dramatic *feuilleton* for the Sunday issue of the journal named "Paris" (which brings him out the new idea into sharp contrast with the old idea and its most conspicuous exponent, Francisque Sarcey, the writer of the dramatic *feuilleton* for the Sunday issue of "Le Temps"), has given such a discriminating and appreciative estimate of "The Master Builder" as its bearing upon advanced thought, that Liberty seizes it with which to begin the fulfillment of its purpose to make itself hereafter a mouthpiece, to some extent, for the exponents of Anarchism in art:

The representation of "Solness, the Master Builder," will make fine game for those sayers of nothings who, following the pretentious tactics of the short-witted, fancy that they can make a laughing-stock of *chefs-d'œuvre* which they do not understand. How they will amuse themselves over this maniac, builder of towers, this Solness, who wishes to construct towers on churches, villas, houses, on his own dwelling, on everything! I should be much surprised if this profusion of towers did not cause our facetious critics to make pat use of a certain old refrain: *Autour, tout autour, de la tour Saint Ja-a-ques!* If they do not quote it, they will fail in all their duties.

Nevertheless it is great, nevertheless it is beautiful, the thought that has guided Ibsen in this work, — great as the public confession of an old man, beautiful as perhaps the loftiest work of dramatic genius that the century has seen. But this grandeur and this beauty are felt and divined rather than seen. The master's thought has certainly suffered in the execution, and the adventurous interpretation of this drama with which we have been favored has only added to its impenetrability.

We are confronted with the most disconcerting contradictions: the piece is simple and yet confused; it is clear and yet, in certain places, densely obscure; it is pessimistic, and it shows us the road of hope! The causes of these apparent disparities may be determined easily enough.

"Solness" is Ibsen's latest work. It is the summary, as it were, of his entire work and life, of his struggles, of the fluctuations of his mind between beliefs that tempted him and doubt, ending in the lofty conception of the supreme ideal. Now, are we not aware how difficult and dangerous it is for an author to place himself upon the scene? In the first place, he generally endeavors, in such a case, to prove far too many things; he delays over insignificant matters, of importance to him only and whose meaning he alone can seize; he knows himself too well and not well enough. That is to say, he confounds his inner life, in which he is engrossed, with his outer life in humanity; he does not succeed in externalizing himself, and cannot take a step backward in order to observe himself as he is amid other men. He feels too much within himself, does not see himself well enough as a stranger, a spectator, and naturally his piece passes beyond the vision of the stranger or spectator.

In those of Ibsen's plays which we have seen hitherto, his symbolism is rather in the *latent* state, to be discovered by him who will. It makes itself felt indirectly, it is suggested by the manifestation upon the scene of a personal and apparent will and conscience. Between the real and the unreal the master usually succeeds in maintaining an admirable *equilibrium* of life. In "Solness" the equilibrium is broken. There is no longer a harmony between the various elements of life, this being sacrificed to the allegory, to the symbol, which take the prominent place and are confused and mingled with the real; hence disturbance and density.

To make this plain an example will do more than these words, which are perhaps a little dry.

You remember "The Enemy of the People." Ibsen starts from the very real adventure of a physician conducting a thermal establishment, who discovers that the water-sources of the neighborhood are poisoned, for the purpose of showing that the entire society rests on falsehood, and the piece, properly speaking, is composed of three others: first, that which is played on the stage, the *apparent piece;* second, that which goes on within the souls of the characters; third, that which is suggested by the two others. In "Solness" Ibsen starts from the adventure of a builder falling from the height of the tower which he has built, for the purpose of showing the elevated and deceptive aspirations of the modern Prometheus which are all summed up in him. But the *three pieces* have no longer their well-defined *rôles;* there is no longer any harmony between them; they overlap; sometimes the humanity disappears, and the symbol, which ought to spring up only in the mind of the spectator, directly intervenes upon the stage. That is to say, that which is played in the *apparent* piece, though simple, becomes complex, and that which goes on within the souls of the characters is at the same time clear and obscure.

The spectator cannot be familiarized with Ibsen and his manner: if he contents himself with *listening* to what is said to him and *looking* at what is shown to him, he will understand "The Enemy of the People" and will be satisfied with the drama. But with "Solness" this is not the case, the story of the builder not constituting in itself alone a sufficiently clear drama. Nor will M. Manclair's lecture (which preceded the performance), good from a literary standpoint and agreeable in its *dilettantism*, treating the rather old question of irresponsibility for men of genius and those who imagine themselves to be such, — an irresponsibility which Ibsen does not at all claim, — do much more to enlighten the spectator as to the play. He will see a cruel and crazy contractor, strangely smitten with a flighty young girl, who urges him on, for some incomprehensible purpose, to break his neck without reason, and all this amid bewildering conversations.

I know very well that, if the spectator complains, they will answer him that these are allegories, symbols, and he will have to hold his peace. Nevertheless it will not do to abuse this pretext in order to excuse the employment of methods that are really unpardonable in a drama of life. Pray let us distinguish between symbol and symbol; we have examples in the piece itself.

At a certain moment of the drama Solness talks with Doctor Herdal; he confides to him that the young disturb him and will some day supplant him. "Youth will knock at my door," he says, "and all will be over with Solness the builder." On the instant there is a knock, and a young girl, Hilde Wangel, appears, arriving, after the fashion of Ibsen's heroines, from the North; she represents youth! Here we have *direct* symbolism, gross and childish.

Admire on the contrary that which *disengages* itself from two other scenes. Solness tells Hilde that formerly he had observed a fissure in the chimney of the old patrimonial dwelling of his wife, and that he had abstained from stopping it up, hoping to see the old barrack catch fire some day that he might rebuild it to suit himself. In fact the house burned, Solness built another, and to this he owes his fortune; only the fire caught on the other side of the chimney, in spite of which he remains convinced of his guilt in wishing for the fire. Does not this little story make us feel with admirable precision the weakness of man before the scruples of his conscience?

In the third act Madame Solness relates — there are many stories in the piece — how her life has been upset. Not that the death of her twin babies, who died shortly after the fire and when but a few days old, has created a great void in her existence: "That was a decree of Providence; to such things one must submit in a spirit of thankfulness to God; besides, the little ones are happy." What has disturbed her life, is the loss of her dear souvenirs of childhood, the family pictures, her silk dresses, her jewels, and her dolls, her beloved dolls with which she had so long lived. Is it possible to render more tangible that other weakness of man, attaching him to insignificant minutiæ, which become to him the whole of life?

But perhaps it would be well at this point to outline the piece.

Master Solness is the son of his works; he has acquired a great reputation as a builder, and this is but justice, for Solness is a really superior man. He has gained a great influence over all who surround him, and toward them he is pitiless, hard, and cruel; he has made a slave of Kaia, a good and sensible young girl who keeps his books, and has reduced his pupils and designers to the strictest dependence. He is afraid of them. He is afraid that youth, with new ideas, may some day evict him, and he keeps it at a distance. Nevertheless, when this youth becomes an admirer of his work and presents itself beneath the features of Hilde, he welcomes it with enthusiasm and suffers himself to be cajoled by it. Hilde, who introduces herself into the house in a somewhat cavalier fashion, dressed as a tourist, keen at repartee and decided in manner, reminds Solness that she first met him ten years before, when she was but a little girl. The builder had come to inaugurate a tower built upon the church near her home and had insisted upon placing the crown of leaves upon the spire with his own hands; and, on seeing him at such a height, Hilde had been unable to avoid a feeling of boundless admiration; this certainly must be the greatest builder in the world! And she declares that, after he came down, he kissed her and then told her that some day she would be a princess, promising that in ten years he would come back to give her a kingdom. It is now ten years, day for day, and she comes to claim her kingdom.

Solness does not remember this promise very well, but says to himself that after all he may have made it; the young girl's babble bewitches him. Hilde questions him about his works. He answers that he builds no more church towers, but houses. She asks him if he could not add a tower to these commonplace houses. Men do not like them, he says; but he has built for himself a new dwelling with a very high tower, and is to inaugurate it on the very next day. Bravo, Master Solness!

Between the old Brovik and his son Ragnar, aspiring only to build comfortable houses with a view to making money; a stupid doctor unable to comprehend the inspirations of his genius; his wife who thinks him mad, continually mourns over the burned home, and sees in life nothing but duty, — between all these Solness suffered. The arrival of Hilde exalts and transforms him. To her he confides his dreams of the impossible, and she approves them, reproaching him with the weakness of his conscience, the scruples, and all the little things that still make him hesitate. She wishes him to be great, to rise above petty jealousies and cowardly fears, and attain the height of his genius.

A foreman is to place the crown upon the vane of the tower with which Solness has flanked his new house. "What!" cries Hilde, "cannot my architect mount as high as he builds?" The builder will go himself. Madame Solness, terrified, declares that her husband is subject to vertigo and begs Mlle. Hilde to dissuade him from this supreme folly. Solness, touched by his wife's fears, is on the point of abandoning the assent of the tower, but Hilde speaks. She threatens to leave him; for his own sake, for hers, she must contemplate him once more as before, triumphant and superb at the top of the tower. "How absurd," she adds, "that one dares not stretch out his hand to grasp happiness, to live, simply because a person whom he knows is in his pathway!"

From the moment that it is to be a question of pride, the builder decides to ascend; he will hang the crown. Nevertheless he confesses to his young friend that he is afraid of expiation. What expiation? This.

Solness was born of a religious family; nothing seemed to him more beautiful in principle than the building of churches; he devoted himself to it with fervor and believed that he was giving satisfaction to the Omnipotent. Yes, God permitted the patrimonial barrack to burn that he might become the master builder and be overwhelmed with remorse; then he took his children from him that he might devote all his energies to churches. Solness saw the game of providence; so, when formerly he ascended to the summit of the tower where Hilde saw him, it was to say to the Omnipotent that henceforth "he would build only houses for men"; now he fears that he must expiate his audacity.

Yes, for ten years he has built houses for men, but not one of them is solid; not one is durable, not one has the smallest turret. Nothing of them will last,

nothing, nothing! Yet he had vowed, like God, to perform the impossible, and that is why he has built a tower higher than that of any church. "And what will you build now?" asks Hilde. A dwelling for happiness, a castle for Princess Hilde, on a very elevated site, with a vertiginous tower affording a view in all directions, *a castle in Spain on solid foundations;* but he cannot do this unless she has faith in him.

Hilde will have this faith when she shall have seen the builder again perform the impossible and rise erect at the top of his tower. He seizes the ladder and mounts; at the top he will address the Omnipotent. While Madame Solness faints and the master's pupils stand in silent stupefaction, Hilde's radiant eyes follow the ascent of Solness. He places the crown. She hears something like the sound of a harp in the air.

There is a loud cry; the master has fallen to the foot of the tower. "What of it? He reached the height! Long live Master Solness!"

This drama, in which real towers are mingled with castles in Spain, and conscience with demons, is not a little hazy. The dialogue gets entangled in the ideas and passes from one to another without notice. The secondary characters — Ragnor, the Positivist, for example — are scarcely outlined. The figure of Hilde, sphinx or chimera, is utterly confused by the complication of symbols that veil it. Solness alone stands out clearly.

Let us now seek the meaning to be given to these allegories, and let us try to let the light into this fog.

By this apologue Ibsen indicates the entire genesis of his work and shows the progress of his mind, the general progress of the human mind, from belief to doubt, summing up all the desires and all the weaknesses of modern genius.

This builder at first sought the ideal in the religion in which he was born; then, little by little, through considering the miseries and lies of humanity, through moral and physical suffering, he lost faith and parted from God.

He wished to labor only for the happiness of men; he was seized with a fine zeal for social questions, the liberation of the individual, the relief of human miseries. At first they applauded, but soon the builder was forced to recognize that nothing could be done with degenerate men, that all that he had built for them lacked solidity and durability, and that of so much toil and effort nothing will remain, nothing, nothing.

Then, in despair, his heart filled with bitterness, feeling that he was misunderstood by those dearest to him and followed only by passive creatures like Kaia or half crazy ones like Hilde, he tried to escape from the dullness and baseness that surrounded him, though he should bring tears to the eyes of his own. He tried to make a new faith, to construct an ideal of his own. Alas! the old beliefs, the scruples of his conscience, and a thousand other bonds prevented him from being a free man, and, when pride had lifted him to the height of the work conceived by his genius, vertigo seized him and he tumbled to the ground.

M. Maurice Bigeon has just published, under the title of "Scandinavian Rebels," a most remarkable work, — remarkable because it is neither pedantic nor dogmatic, and deals sincerely with things seen and heard. He devotes to "Solness" some very fine pages, which are a sort of summary of his study of Ibsen, but I cannot fall in with his very gloomy conclusion: "Everywhere night, everywhere darkness and the infinite lament of mankind! Nothing can save us, there is no salvation, and Christ suffered in vain! . . . . And you, O youth! believe those who have seen all, fathomed all, destroyed all, and beware of desire, beware of love which tortures and kills, beware of vast designs and of the challenges of the infinite! Sleep!"

Well, no, a thousand times no! If Solness was seized with vertigo and fell, "what of it?" as Hilde says, "he reached the height." The fall is the man's only; the idea is immortal; the annihilation of effort is an unjustified conclusion. Solness will not build the castle for Princess Hilde, but who can say that it will not be built by some one among the young who are knocking at the door? *A castle in Spain on solid foundations,* so high that from the top one may look down, far down, upon those who construct churches in building houses, — an ideal grander than that of religions, prouder than that of societies, resting no longer on mystical superstition or on the ignorance of majorities, but on the *solid foundations* of eternal truths.

Is this not, as it were, the testament of this builder of genius, given in the evening of his career? Does it not reveal to us that *impossible* which he sought, which he foresaw, which others will perhaps attain, and show at the horizon of the future century the dawn of the artistic faith of tomorrow?

One easily understands the delicacy required for the interpretation of such a piece. The actors of L'Œuvre were continually floating between the real and the unreal, striving to emphasize symbols with which they had scarcely to concern themselves. The character of Hilde, played after the fashion of an artless girl, became ambiguous and utterly changed in meaning. One can congratulate the performers only on the good will shown in making known a work which, however debatable from the scenic point of view, is substantially immense and splendid.

The remainder of M. Jullien's *feuilleton*, devoted to the revival of Sardou's "Fédora," brings the old theatre into such sharp contrast with the new as seen in "Solness" that it may well be given here also.

Now I must talk to you of "Fédora." I should prefer to continue to deal with dramatic art, but the doings of the day subject one to these cruel exigencies.

Here we have a piece which gives an impression of nothing, of nothing done up in a parcel. A first act in which there is nothing at all, a fourth which has nothing to do with the subject, and two acts of preparation. Really one stands petrified when he reflects that the author of such a contrivance has an established reputation for cleverness. Ah! the work gives a proud idea of those who have given this reputation and indicates in him who possesses it a pretty lack of shame. Let us proceed to admire the carpentry.

The piece begins, does it not, with a domestic scene. Princess Fédora is to marry the son of the head of the Russian police, Captain Vladimir. On her way home from the Théâtre Michel, Fédora goes to call on her *fiancé;* he is not at home; but presently he is brought in, dying. Immediately the princess begins an investigation. She learns that during the day Vladimir received a *letter* appointing a rendezvous. It must be this letter that drew the captain into a trap; it is this letter.

What has become of this letter? The servant declares that his master threw it carelessly into a drawer which he did not even take the trouble to lock. Fédora opens the drawer: the letter is not there. Then it has been taken. By whom? Count Loris Ipanoff has been in the room; it must be he; it is he. He had divined that Vladimir would carelessly throw the letter into the drawer without locking it; he has come; he has taken it. Loris Ipanoff lives across the street. Mr. police commissioner, go and arrest him; he must be a Nihilist; he is a Nihilist; he has taken revenge upon the head of the police force by killing Vladimir, his son; hurry, Mr. police commissioner.

But Loris is already on his way to Paris, and since, as it would seem, the telegraph cannot be depended upon in Russia, and people cannot therefore be arrested at the frontier, Fédora flies in pursuit of Loris, accompanied by a half-dozen galley-sergeants.

At Paris, in the *salon* of a friend, the princess meets Loris. She is no longer furious at the loss of the young man; on the contrary, a sudden change has taken place within her. Why? How? Do not ask me; she loves him! Nevertheless, as he confesses that it was really he who killed Vladimir, — without immediately explaining under what circumstances, — she no longer loves him, and the terrible idea of vengeance again becomes uppermost. Fédora invites Loris to visit her an hour later at her residence. There Russian policemen, in waiting, will bind him and place him on a yacht, which will take him at all possible speed to Havre, where he will be transferred to a Russian frigate already under steam. Meanwhile, on the spot — it is two o'clock in the morning — she sends a *letter* to the head of the St. Petersburg police, informing against two individuals whom she suspects of complicity in the Nihilistic assassination, one of them being a brother of Loris.

Scarcely has she finished these little Machiavellian preparations when Loris arrives. He declares that he is not a Nihilist, and that he killed Vladimir because he discovered him in criminal conversation with his wife! *Letters* that he has on his person show this. The princess examines these documents, verifies their authenticity, listens to the story of the crime, — which furnishes Madame Sarah Bernhardt an opportunity to be superb, — and concludes by saying: "You killed him: you did well!"

Yes, but the policemen are in the next room waiting to bind Loris. What is to be done? "I love you, do not go away." And Fédora offers him the hospitality of her alcove until the next day. How simple! For several days the two lovers cruise at pleasure on the little yacht. The princess forgets everything, even that she has sent a monstrous information to St. Petersburg. She wastes a fine opportunity to write a letter. On the other hand, she and her lover receive a package of letters from St. Petersburg. A *letter* informs Fédora that, following her accusations, the brother of Loris and his friend have been cast into prison and have died there, and that Loris's mother has not survived her despair: what a blow for the poor boy, who loves his mother so well!

In fact, when he reads another *letter* telling him of this misfortune, Guitry [the name of the actor impersonating Loris] is deeply moved and even forces the spectators to share his emotion. But one thing torments Loris; it is said to be a woman living in Paris who lodged the information against himself and his relatives! As he is not very intelligent he does not suspect that this woman may be the ex-fiancée of Vladimir. Fédora's anxiety betrays her, and Loris would strangle her like a dog, if this blundering princess, taking from her bosom the cross of the Cantacuzènes prepared in the second act, and in which she has substituted a violent poison for the relics, did not do justice to herself by swallowing the contents.

Really, what does all this signify? What interest can all these stories of letters have for any one? The thing that one is interested to know is what these people think and what has led them to their thought. One would like to know the work of their will, of their personality, the struggles that go on within them; to see them think, love, hate, live, in short; to discover a general idea, a human thought, something: but there are only preparations. And when we are well prepared, there comes a claptrap, superficial, and hardly relevant scene, deriving its only value from the miracle of an exceptional interpretation.

Though one were disposed to call in question the talent of Sarah Bernhardt, he could not possibly dispute it after reflecting that this artist succeeds, now and then, in making him forget what a clumsy adjustment of trashy nothings he has before his eyes. Yes, she succeeds in giving a semblance of life to these nothings, in animating them, making them palpitate, very well seconded, moreover, by Guitry in the production of tearful effects. For the moment one is under the charm, one tastes the delicious and poignant sensations of this dramatic force which understands so well how to petrify your soul: but it is only a flash; straightway some stupidity of the author plunges you back into the depths of absurdity, out of which the tragedian tried in vain to lift you. Consequently, for the rest of the time, the artist contents herself with caressing her chin with the plumes of her fan, which has become in all her pieces an inevitable accessory of the moments when she is bored and finds nothing to do; when Sarah takes her fan, you can take your newspaper.

Soon after "The Master-Builder," Paris saw also "A Doll's House," which was produced at the Vaudeville, with Mme. Réjane as Nora. The following article by Henry Bauer, the dramatic critic of "L'Écho de Paris," was prompted by this event.

I was present Friday evening at the public representation of "A Doll's House" at the Vaudeville, and I awaited with curiosity the attitude of the spectators towards the *dénouement*, when Nora, enlightened, disabused, arrived at self-consciousness, declaring her rights as a human being superior to her domestic and social duties, abandons her husband and children in order to create for herself a free life and to cultivate her personality. This revolt in speech and conduct against nature, family, and society struck the public dumb. The impression was so profound that no one had time to recover and pursue the unnatural creature with a clamor of protest and malediction.

Never was an assemblage of men and women so assaulted in their hereditary prejudices and so deeply

wounded in the spot of their dearest sentiments.

As the audience passed out, upon all lips there were the same exclamations: "It is madness! It is frightful!"

"All very well for the wife, but the mother!" repeated the women. "One may leave her husband; it is abominable to abandon one's children."

In the plays of Ibsen one should not adhere to the letter, but should disengage the spirit; it requires attentive thought to penetrate the significance of the dramatic action and its superior morality. What did the author intend to personify in Nora? Woman a slave in society and the family, stripped of her personality, deprived of self-consciousness, a reproductive animal. As a young girl her parents forbid her to think and to see, shut her up within the formulas of an artificial education, discipline her mind and body, her nature and sensations, to the artificial rules of education, to the conditions of her social standing. It is their endeavor to keep her an infant, incapable of judgment and discernment, and consequently they do not allow the doll to choose, to select a companion in accordance with her heart. Unions are determined by considerations of interest, fortune, position, in which they are much inferior to the state of nature, where the female permits the approach of no male unless worthy of her, healthy and vigorous. A proprietor serves his mares with stallions of good blood fit to produce superior offspring; but, governed solely by his pride and his advantage, he will commit his daughter to the hazards of a shattered and worn-out husband, diseased physically and impoverished morally. And here she is a wife; a husband, usually almost a stranger, has initiated her into the relations of the sexes and inflicted maternity upon her. She was ignorant of life, and this man is charged with the duty of teaching her, of forming her, of completing her, of inuring her to all the villainies that have been kept hidden from her. How can he fulfil this function of a teacher? Has he not other things which he deems more urgent to preoccupy him, — the care of his business, the struggle of interests, the conquest of fortune? The best husbands consider that it is sufficient to provide for the household expenses and the maintenance of their companion. Between them there are the natural approaches, but no moral tie is formed. Thus for years they pass the days side by side and the nights in each other's arms, and they do not know each other. The wife has created in pain the reproduction of a man to whom her soul is a stranger. It is not his fault if education and the family yoke have made of her, instead of a confidant, an associate, a sister of his thought, a pretty, well-dressed doll or a housewife absorbed in domestic cares.

Nevertheless, at contact with life, at the shock of trials, at the stings of grief and pain, the imprisoned personality awakens and shakes off the chains of education and prejudices; it seeks to escape by falsehood, duplicity, trickery. Such are the expedients to which the average woman finally resorts; but the chosen ones, the intelligent and the daring, take the course of open rebellion. Has she not seen suddenly, behind a torn curtain of illusion, the paltry character, the moral ugliness of the husband? What! this is the man whom she thought to love though she did not choose him? This is the sire who has breathed the flower of her youth and penetrated the mystery of her body?

"I have never been to him anything but an object of ornament and pleasure, a useful doll, an invention of social engineers economically coordinating the bed and the kitchen, reproduction and housekeeping. A free soul lives within me and today makes itself known; it tells me that, submissive to slavery, I have not had an hour of moral liberty, of independent thought; that I have not chosen, that I know nothing of real love with the loved one of my election; that I have been, in short, only a reflection, a reflection of the father, a reflection of the husband, a captive personality."

No, the sole function of woman is not maternity, as imposed upon her by tyrants and autocrats who based the family upon property arising from conquest. "The woman that I like best," answered Napoleon to Madame de Staël, "is first mine and next she who bears the most children." Woman is not thus reducible to an organ and a belly. She is a being free by birth, like man, who has absolute rights and not fictitious duties, the right to exercise her mind, to dispose of her body where she pleases, as she pleases, for whom she pleases. The violence of chieftains and the lies of societies have kept her in the condition of a female devoted to gestation, to child-birth, struck with incapacity in every other direction; the female has taken her revenge by all the artifices of slaves and favorites, by depraving influence, excitement to quarrels, the seeds of jealousy and hatred in the exasperation of sexuality.

It is for the thinker and the moralist to proclaim that she is a free creature and not simply a crucible, and that the fruit of maternity and the continuation of the race must be dominated and governed by the law of love. They are right, the poets and romanticists, priests of the beautiful and the ideal, who consecrate to love temples of marble and gold. In them shines the poetry of woman, supreme ray of plastic beauty and moral liberty; in communion with them is the popular belief that destines beauty, power, and intelligence to the children of love.

This is one of those shouts of rebellion to which only men of genius can give resounding voice. The theatre is the most sonorous of tribunes. From the stage Ibsen, in his formidable work, has affirmed the rights of the individual, man or woman, prior and superior to the contrivances and arrangements of societies; it is by scenic action, the creation of characters born of his genius, that he has punctured the balloon of institutions, prejudices, and conventions, and shown the artificial and ridiculous nature of all that the human herd has been accustomed to respect, to love, and to sanctify.

It is for us to take up his ideas, to realize his visions, to popularize his thought, and thus to contribute our share to the mental revolt. It is by continuity of effort, by repetitions, by reiterations, and also by faith and enthusiasm that the minds of the masses are penetrated and the crowd is converted to the pictures painted by hope. Our world is old, and its institutions, its religions, its laws, its governments, and its masters inspire us now with nothing but contempt. With free and lofty souls, we are journeying perhaps toward the unknown, but what we see is so full of ugliness and injustice and untruth, that nothing can be worse. Will the change come from heaven or from earth? Will the renovation beside which the French Revolution was but a *bourgeois* plaything ever arrive? No one can say; but the visions of dreamland are beautiful, and it is sweet to foresee, though with eyes already invaded by the shadow of years, the dawn of a new society.

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